Decling level of teachers' training institutes

†990. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the level of teachers' training institutes is declining continuously;

(b) if so, the details of efforts being made to raise the level of such institutes; and

(c) whether there is any plan to close down the National Council of Teachers Education (NCTE)?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) continuously strives to ensure adherence to its Regulations to maintain the desired quality in teacher training institutions. The Council has framed Regulations to prescribe various parameters and norms for quality teacher education programme. Every teacher education institution has to fulfil the norms and standards prescribed by NCTE. In this direction, the Regulation of 2007 has stipulated that institutions running secondary level teacher training programme like B.Ed. and B.P.Ed., would have to obtain accreditation form the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) with a 'letter grade B' developed by NAAC before seeking additional intake in these programmes.

NCTE has revised the Policy for inspection of institution for ensuring better quality of teacher training institutions and other matters.

The NCTE has also undertaken a study on demand and supply of teachers and teacher educators for proper and effective regulation of teacher education in the country.

(c) NCTE came into existence as a statutory body in 1995 in pursuance of NCTE Act, 1993 to achieve planned and coordinated development of Teacher Education across the country as also to determine, maintain and coordinate standards in teacher education and curb the proliferation of sub standard institutions.

A Review Committee was constituted by this Department under the Chairmanship of ShriSudeep Banerjee, the then Adviser to MHRD to conduct an indepth study of the functioning of NCTE and its Regional Committees. The Committee has, *inter-alia* recommended that the NCTE Act, 1993 should be repealed. The Government is taking further action on the recommendations of the Committee.

Removal of Election Commissioners

†991. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering or proposes to consider any proposal to amend the procedure for removal of Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners;

(b) if so, the details of these proposals; and

(c) the reasons for proposing such an amendment in the said procedure?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (c) The Election Commission of India, in July, 2004, has forwarded to the Government a set of twenty two proposals on electoral reforms, which *inter-alia* includes a proposal for an amendment provide

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

the very same protection and safeguard in the matter of removability of Election Commissioners from office as is available to the Chief Election Commissioner. The said proposal along with the other proposals on electoral reforms are presently under consideration of Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice.

Vacant posts in High Courts

992. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for 26 per cent vacant posts in High Courts as stated by Hon'ble Chief Justice of India on 29th November, 2007;

(b) the actions proposed by Government subsequent to the above statement;

(c) the sanctioned strength and working strength of judges of High Courts as on 31st December, 2007; and

(d) whether it is a fact that delay in deciding cases would help the accused on bail?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) and (b) Pursuant to the Supreme Court Judgement of October 6, 1993 read with their Advisory Opinion of October 28, 1998, the process of initiation of proposal for appointment of Judges of a High Court lies with the Chief Justice of the High Court. The Government has been requesting the Chief Justices of the High Courts, from time to time, to initiate proposals for filling up of the present and vacancies anticipated during the next six months.

(c) As on 31st December, 2007, against the sanctioned strength of 690 Judges, 595 Judges were in position leaving 95 vacancies to be filled up.

(d) With a view to expedite disposal of the cases, Government has taken a number of measures such as establishment of Fast Track Courts, Family Courts and are providing funds to the State Governments for strengthening the judicial infrastructure and computerisation of the Courts.

Retirement age of judges

993. DR. ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is considering a proposal to extend the age of retirement for all judges in the country to 65 years; and

(b) if not, the reasons why this is not being considered?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) and (b) A proposal to increase the retirement age of the Judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts by three years is under examination of the Government. As regards increase in the retirement age of District/Subordinate Court judges, it is the concern of the respective State Governments.